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**Title:** Historical Geographies of Apprenticeship: Rethinking and Retracing Craft Conveyance Over Time and Place

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**Abstract:**

Geographers are demonstrating increasing interest in the power and significance of craft and artisanal practices. However within this scholarship very little attention has been paid to theorising or tracing the conveyance of craft practices over time and place. This paper seeks to address this deficit by demonstrating how craft conveyance has been achieved through historical geographies of apprenticeship. To do so the paper firstly reviews how the figure of the apprentice and the forms and geographies apprenticeship have been recently reconfigured. Secondly, and by drawing on the work of anthropologists and geographers, it argues that the model of learning between master and apprentice is more dynamic, relational and context-dependant than that espoused in Richard Sennett's seminal text on craftsmanship. Moreover while geographers have begun to think through how craft practices become sedimented in place over successive generations, the main contribution of this paper is to think and work through how craft practices travel from place to place over successive generations. Specifically this is to examine how the corporeal and material practices of a workshop gain not just temporal duration but also spatial extension. This will be achieved empirically by retracing how the 'Wardian-style' of taxidermy practice travelled from London to Glasgow through the movements of Wardian apprentice Charles Kirk. Following non-representational theorisations of practice, and what I shall term the 'journeyings' of Kirk, the paper demonstrates that rather than passively absorbing the 'secrets' of a workshop the apprentice actively co- and re-produces its corporeal and material practices and carries them forward where they are actively reworked into and by new communities and ecologies of practice. The paper concludes by emphasising the relevance and resonance of apprenticeship for rethinking and retracing craft conveyance.

**Keywords:** Apprenticeship; Craft Conveyance; Practice; Learning; Journeyman; Taxidermy; Workshop;

**Abbreviated Title:** Historical Geographies of Apprenticeship

Geographers are demonstrating increasing interest in the geographies – cultural, political and economic – of craft and craftwork. So far those engaged in researching ‘craft geographies’ or ‘making cultures’ seek to underline the social, economic and political potentials of craft and artisanal practices for responding to post-capitalist relations.<sup>1</sup> These geographers are therefore largely rooting their craft concerns in the present.<sup>2</sup> This paper addresses this presentism by opening up spaces of enquiry into historical geographies of apprenticeship. To do so is to connect to non-representational currents in geography concerned with thinking through the geographical dynamics of body-practices of the ‘long durée’.<sup>3</sup> Such scholarship argues that the studying of embodied practices and skills of the past should be a central concern of geographers because ‘as one of the chief sources of renewal of social systems... practices and skills are, in a sense, a motor of history’ and therefore historical geographies.<sup>4</sup> And as apprenticeship has been one of the chief sources of skill formation and technological change across time and space it is my contention that it too should become a central geographical concern. In particular I will demonstrate the relevance and resonance of apprenticeship for rethinking and retracing craft conveyance. While geographers have begun to think through how craft practices become sedimented in place over successive generations, the main contribution of this paper is to think and work through how craft practices travel from place to place over successive generations.<sup>5</sup> Specifically, this is to examine how the material and corporeal practices of a workshop gain not just temporal duration but also spatial extension. This will be achieved empirically by retracing how the ‘Wardian-style’ of taxidermy practice travelled from London to Glasgow through the ‘journeyings’ of Wardian apprentice Charles Kirk. Before we begin retracing these journeyings it is necessary to firstly review how apprenticeship has been traditionally understood and recently reconsidered outside of geography.

## HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHIES OF APPRENTICESHIP

Geographers have long demonstrated an interest in charting the geographical and bodily dynamics of work and employment, yet within this scholarship very little attention has been paid to historical geographies of apprenticeship.<sup>6</sup> When historians consider apprenticeship, they often generalize in terms of three extended periods:

“These may broadly be characterized as that of “guild apprenticeship”, let us say from about the 12th century to 1563, with the state underpinning much practice; the period of statutory apprenticeship, from 1563 to 1814 (with guilds slowly

attenuating); and finally a great diversity of forms which might be summarised as “voluntary” apprenticeship, often agreements between employers and unions, from 1814 to the present day.’<sup>7</sup>

While apprenticeship has a dynamic history in Britain, it is the medieval guilds that have, until recently, dominated scholarly attentions and therefore understandings of the apprentice and apprenticeships. According to Richard Sennett, in the medieval guild ‘male authority was incarnate in the three-tiered hierarchy of masters, journeymen, and apprentices’.<sup>8</sup> Boys, though occasionally girls, could be apprenticed to a guild master from twelve or younger for between five and nine years. Contracts, called indentures, specified the length of apprenticeship, usually seven years, and the cost was often borne by the young person’s parents. Many historians have rightly underlined how the guild system was rigid, inflexible and privileged the master.<sup>9</sup> However, some have provided a more optimistic view that guild apprenticeships provided ‘stability for a child, a secure future, with guaranteed employment and limited competition’ and were a critical avenue for skill formation and technological change in early modern Europe.<sup>10</sup> Yet, as the guild system required capital investment on the part of apprentice’s family, skilled apprenticeships, and thus skill formation, was largely reserved for boys from more affluent backgrounds.

The introduction of ‘parish’ and ‘pauper’ apprenticeships under the Elizabethan Poor Law came to be used as a way of providing training for poor, illegitimate and orphaned children of both sexes from the early seventeenth to late nineteenth century. These schemes largely supplied apprentices for lower-skilled and therefore lower status occupations such as farm labouring and brickmaking for boys, and manufacturing and menial household service for girls.<sup>11</sup> The binding out of pauper apprenticeships was also a geographically widespread practice throughout the colonies whereby orphaned and abandoned children were raised to adulthood in a legal condition of indentured servitude.<sup>12</sup> Such apprenticeships were a vital means of providing basic living needs for these children, and have been positively interpreted as a way of maintaining social stability and encouraging economic development throughout the colonies.<sup>13</sup> However, the implementation of pauper apprenticeships within the ‘New World’ context is more negatively associated with forms of bondage and slavery.<sup>14</sup> The most extreme and racialised manifestation of this occurred after slavery was abolished in the British colonies, when a system of ‘pauper apprenticeship’ was implemented to supposedly transition plantations from a system of slavery to free labour.<sup>15</sup>

However, this form of ‘slavery by another name’ was really a measure to ensure freed slaves would not abandon the plantations and that they would remain profitable for planters.<sup>16</sup>

While there are certainly many difficult histories associated with apprenticeship, not least that of child abuse, it is also increasingly being recognised that apprenticeships in Britain, at least, were much more fluid and geographically dynamic than has been traditionally understood.<sup>17</sup> According to Chris Minns and Patrick Wallace even in the early modern period apprenticeships were not the uniform and rigid institution vigorously policed by society and guilds that is sometimes imagined. Their quantitative analysis of samples of apprentices and masters from London and Bristol in the seventeenth century demonstrates how apprenticeship was ‘an amalgam of informal norms developed *around* inflexible formal benchmarks’. They argue that the relationship between apprentice and master was much more dynamic than previously thought and that ‘hidden within the superficially rigid rules of apprenticeship was a plural and flexible training institution, supplying skills according to demand and adapting the terms of service to the needs of individuals’.<sup>18</sup> Feminist scholars have also argued for the need to work with a more diverse understanding of the figure of the apprentice. Studies of girls’ apprenticeship have so far focused on pauper apprenticeship, where the overwhelming majority of girls, some as young as six, were set to learn the ‘art and mystery’ of housewifery.<sup>19</sup> However, in a forthcoming study Amy Erickson uncovers a ‘surprisingly large population of well-to-do tradeswomen’ in the eighteenth century who were apprenticed in London’s luxury trades centring on millinery.<sup>20</sup> Her new evidence undermines received views on the relationship between women and paid work and its geography in the City of London.<sup>21</sup>

The mobility, both socially and geographically, of the apprentice has also been emphasised by recent writings.<sup>22</sup> Even during the time of the medieval guilds apprentices in Britain were highly mobile, travelling long distances to enter into service with masters with whom they had no kin or geographical connection.<sup>23</sup> According to Minns and Wallace by the seventeenth century apprenticeship was one of the major ‘push’ factors in rural-urban migration, with apprenticeship encompassing ‘flows through cities and their institutions in order to obtain the skills and connections that were concentrated there, as well as permanent in-migrations’. While apprenticeship was therefore an integral part of a wider, highly mobile, national training market, Minns and Wallace also point out that apprentices moved between workshops and masters’ households within the city. These local

movements suggest that ‘the institution of apprenticeship was widely adapted according to the individual and their circumstances and resources with at least some degree of agreement from both apprentices and masters’.<sup>24</sup> This again underlines the fluid and dynamic nature of the relationship, supporting Griffiths’ account that there was a ‘multitude of particular worlds’ among apprentices.<sup>25</sup>

The implications of these recent reconsiderations of both the figure of the apprentice and the forms and geographies of apprenticeship are highly relevant for historical geographers. Firstly, the figure of the apprentice was more diverse, both in terms of background and gender, and more mobile, both locally and nationally, than is traditionally understood. Secondly, apprenticeship was a geographically widespread practice and played a key role in historical geographies of work and employment by providing both national and international training routes and markets. Thirdly, it is important to recognise that at the micro-level the relationship, and thus contract, between master and apprentice was more fluid than previously thought (though it is just as important to note here that this fluidity could still end up privileging the master). If the apprenticeship contract was less rigid than previously thought, it follows that the model of learning between master and apprentice was more dynamic than traditionally thought too. The paper now turns to interdisciplinary work re-examining this dynamic.

## RETHINKING CRAFT CONVEYANCE IN (AND BEYOND) THE WORKSHOP

In his book *The Craftsman* Richard Sennett argues that the slow-time development of craft practices has unhelpfully contributed to an understanding of craft conveyance as the unchallenged ‘passing on’ of static ‘cultural traditions’ from one generation to the next. Sennett critiques this ‘dulled-wits view’ of tradition and conveyance, and instead concurs with Ruskin’s sense that ‘the errors, imperfections, and variations that attend any practice’ are consciously handed down too.<sup>26</sup> However, through his examples of medieval goldsmiths and weavers Sennett reasserts that it was still the intention of the craftsman to hand down craft practices intact from generation to generation. This initiated the formation of the guilds and instituted a three-tiered learning-hierarchy between masters, journeymen and apprentices. As acknowledged above, this model of learning has

traditionally been considered as rigid, inflexible and privileging the authority of the master. For Sennett this hierarchical model also created the problem of 'knowledge transfer'. Using the example of Antonio Stradivari's violin workshop, he sets out the thesis that in the workshop, where 'individuality and distinctiveness dominates', 'a concrete limit is placed on the long-term viable life of the workshop'.<sup>27</sup> According to Sennett the reason the violins crafted at Stradivari's workshop cannot be replicated is because the master's authority and originality inhibited knowledge transfer. Or, as he puts it in the abstract:

'Once the master dies, all the clues, moves, and insights he or she has gathered into the totality of the work cannot be reconstructed; there's no way to ask him or her to make the tacit explicit.'<sup>28</sup>

While I agree with Sennett that it is preferable that the 'clues, moves and insights' of a craft are embodied in a human rather than in 'a lifeless, static code of practice', I do take issue with his argument that the difficulty of knowledge transfer is that it becomes the master's 'personal secret'.<sup>29</sup> This is problematic as it presents the master's authority in the workshop as absolute. Moreover, in emphasising the authority and individuality of the master Sennett presents a rigid and one-directional model of knowledge transfer, what Jean Lave has critically termed 'the culture of acquisition'.<sup>30</sup> According to this model of learning the apprentice absorbs and internalizes the 'intrinsic rules', or 'secrets' in Sennett's terms, of the craft through observation and mimesis of the master.<sup>31</sup> This model of knowledge transmission has been long critiqued in anthropology for figuring the learner or apprentice as passive. The fundamental insight of anthropological studies of learning has been to assert that knowledge is not transmitted in a one-directional fashion, nor is it 'handed down' as a ready-made corpus of information, but rather undergoes continual regeneration in the contexts of the learners' active and practical engagement with their surroundings. According to these studies the contribution that each generation makes to the next lies in shaping the contexts, or providing the 'scaffolding', within which learners develop their own understandings and practices.<sup>32</sup>

To counter the 'culture of acquisition' thesis, Lave and Etienne Wenger developed the concept of 'communities of practice' to emphasize learning as a collaborative and situated practice.<sup>33</sup> This has since been applied in a range of learning settings to acknowledge the shared ways of knowing and doing (including the use of specific tools and artefacts) that

are developed and sustained through mutual learning relationships, including those between master and apprentice. However, while the concept provides a 'social context' for locating apprenticeship, Christina Grasseni argues that the communities of practice involved in apprenticeship and the transmission of skill should be understood as both social and material.<sup>34</sup> Drawing on her ethnographic study of contemporary cattle breeding in northern Italy she underlines that the apprentice cattle breeder is not just enmeshed within a context of social learning but is also 'participating in a richly textured environment'.<sup>35</sup> To acknowledge this she combines the concept of 'communities of practice' with Tim Ingold's ecological perspective on the process of skill, a perspective that situates the practitioner right from the start in the context of an active engagement with the constituents of his or her surroundings.<sup>36</sup> Grasseni's resulting idea of 'ecologies of practice' enables her to focus on the social and material practices of apprenticeship in cattle breeder communities, and to provide a broader theoretical and ethnographic framework for analysing 'concrete processes of enskillment, the role of *artefacts* in an ecology of attention, and *social, historical and institutional paths* of engagement in practices'.<sup>37</sup>

However, the focus in much of the anthropological literature is often on 'personal apprenticeship', which necessarily centres on humanistic conceptions of learning and apprenticeship.<sup>38</sup> By contrast, and via post- and more-than-human ontologies, geographers are increasingly paying attention to the ways in which craft practices are co-produced between different actors (both human and non-human), technologies and materials in and across a variety of temporal and spatial scales, contexts and settings. For example, in their book *Shaping the Day* Paul Glennie and Nigel Thrift argue, in line with anthropological studies of learning, that in order to understand clockmaking as 'communities of practice in action' all three kinds of learning – 'corporal, heuristic and ecological' – need to be taken into account. However, to emphasise the importance of craftsmen 'learning from objects' they draw on actor network theory to stress that the craft of clockmaking not only depended upon human and non-human alliances, but that these alliances were key to how these 'networks of practice' progressed over time and space.<sup>39</sup> Chris Gibson similarly pushes for greater recognition of the 'material inheritances' of craft production that are reconfigured in place over successive generations. Centring his analysis on cowboy boot-making workshops in El Paso, Texas, Gibson demonstrates how the boots are co-produced in the workshops by the legacies – geographic, social and material – of past manufacturing: 'migrant workers with requisite embodied skills; antique tools; and



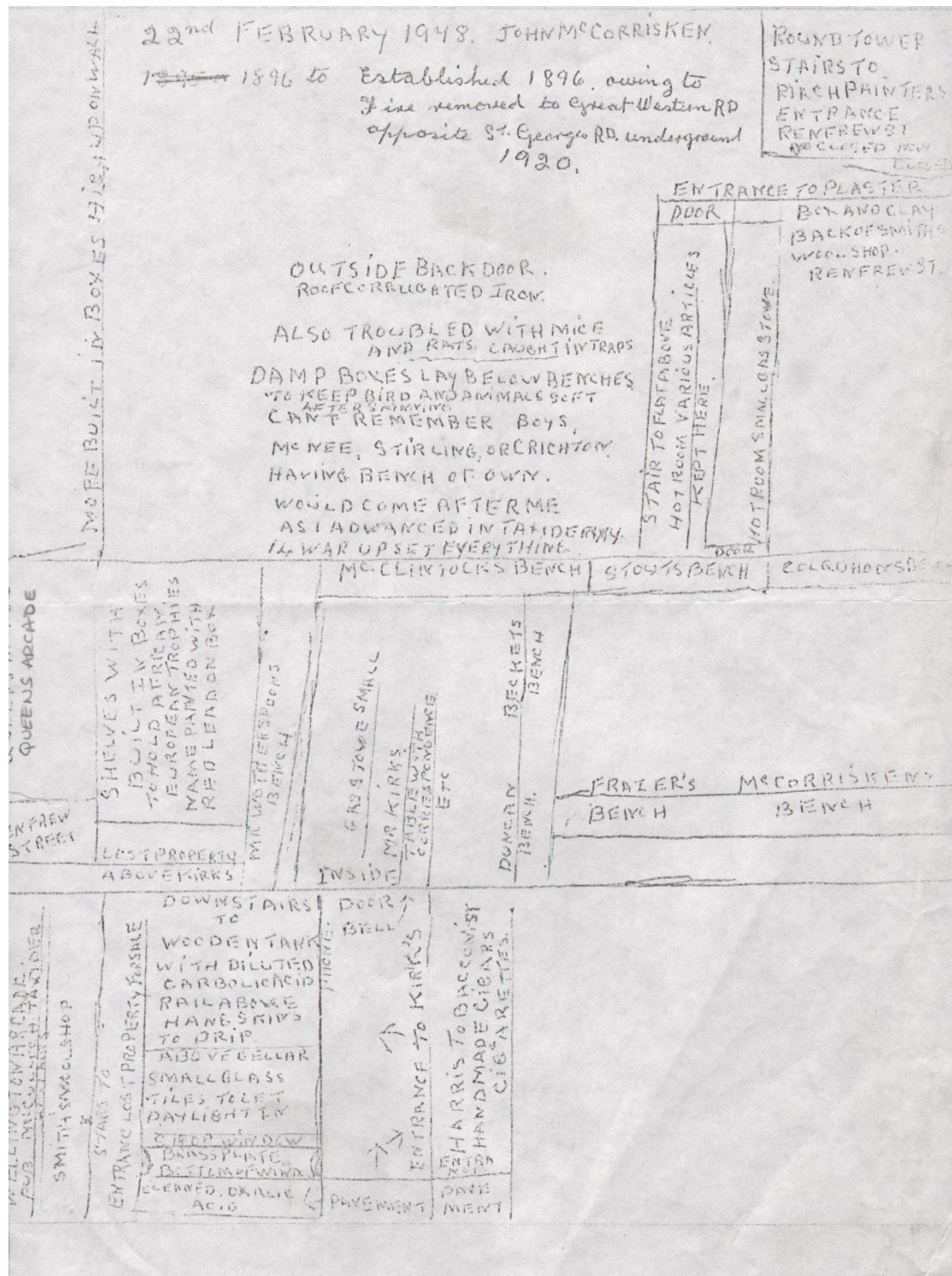
significant stocks of leather'. By foregrounding materiality in the historical–geographic evolution of contemporary craft production Gibson highlights the constitutive and interactive role 'input materials, tools and product designs' play in the evolution of production processes in the workshop.<sup>40</sup>

These debates and developments have important implications for our understanding of craft conveyance in (and beyond) the workshop. First, it is important to recognise that even in the workshop where 'individuality and distinctiveness' dominates the authority of the master is not absolute. Rather, on joining the workshop the apprentice is incorporated into its community of practice and richly structured environment. The apprentices' enskillment is therefore not detached from, but grounded in, their own active and relational engagement with the social and material constructions of the craft and surroundings of the workshop. Placed within a situation of this kind, rather than passively absorbing the 'rules' or 'secrets' of a craft through observation of the master, the apprentice actively picks up the constructions of a craft, and develops the bodily co-ordinations required to co-produce it. Second, the learning of a craft is therefore not just about the transmission of specific techniques, but rather about developing a broader capacity to work with (and against) tools and materials as well as other community members and environmental factors. Third, and as I have emphasized in my own work, the continuity of a craft is not static, but rather undergoes continual revision as practitioners respond to, and thus develop, tools, materials and environments across the generations and therefore time and space.<sup>41</sup>

To return to Sennett's thesis about the difficulty of knowledge transfer and the limits it places on the viable life of a workshop, the difficulty is not that it becomes a 'personal secret' but rather because the life of, and thus production in, the workshop is a precarious relational and ecological achievement. The production of Stradivari's violins depended not just on the master (and thus should not be thought of as solely his achievement) but also on communities and ecologies of practice both within and beyond the workshop. Just as we should not understand the master as working in isolation then, nor should we understand the workshop in this way. The long-term practice of a workshop therefore depends on the strength of its social, material and ecological connectedness not only within but also beyond its walls. And, as Sennett acknowledges, this understanding was evident as early as 1377 through the observations of Arab-Berber historiographer Ibn Khaldun who argued that disconnected workshops and sedentary guilds 'die out', whereas

goldsmiths and their guild were made strong 'by travel and mobility'.<sup>42</sup> However, while Sennett does not develop the implications of Khaldun's observations it is the aim of the remainder of this paper to do so. While other geographers are pushing for greater recognition of the 'material inheritances' of craft production that are reconfigured in place over successive generations, my concern is to think and work through how craft practices travel from place to place over successive generations. This move requires a shift in attention from knowledge transfer or transmission, often associated with one-directional and static understandings of the transfer of craft practices, to craft conveyance, which is to emphasise dynamic and mobile understandings of the transfer of craft practices. Empirically this move also requires a shift in attention away from the master to the journeyman. Where the master is often understood as 'place-bound' the journeyman moves from place to place or, rather, from workshop to workshop.<sup>43</sup> The movements of a journeyman therefore offer a way of retracing how the craft practices of a workshop gain not just temporal duration but also spatial extension. However, to avoid falling back on static and singular understandings of craft practices and practitioners the figure of the journeyman requires some critical attention.

THE JOURNEYINGS OF AN APPRENTICE



**Figure 1: Floor Plan of Charles Kirk & Co., 156 Sauchiehall Street Glasgow. Sketched by John McCorricken 22nd February 1948. Author's own copy.**

I was first introduced to the working life of journeyman taxidermist Charles Kirk whilst unpacking a collection of period taxidermy manuals that had been lent to me by a retired Kelvingrove Museum taxidermist. At the bottom of the box I came across a slim folder marked 'Kirk's', and knowing Kirk's to have been a taxidermy firm based in Glasgow I was excited to find inside a floor plan for the premises of the Sauchiehall Street workshop (see Figure 1). The floor plan had been drafted by an ex-employee of the firm John McCorrisken on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1948.<sup>44</sup> On examining McCorrisken's spidery schematic I was struck by the possibility that it could well be all that was left to mark the firm's existence, a precious yet sketchy record of its layout, inhabitants, fittings and fixtures. Although the writing was faded, I was able to make out most of what had been written and marked down. Once deciphered, the plan offers intimate details not just about the layout of the Sauchiehall Street shop but of the organisation of the employees and equipment and therefore its taxidermy practice. Elsewhere I have demonstrated how the floor plan offers a sense of the workshop 'in life': the immediacy of fleeting sounds, ineffable odours, somatic routines and animal agencies that are not necessarily marked as 'there', yet palpably still reverberate.<sup>45</sup> In this paper, however, I aim to show how the floor plan offers a starting point for considering how the life of a workshop can gain temporal duration and spatial extension through the 'journeyings' of taxidermist apprentice Charles Kirk.

McCorrisken notes on the floor plan that Kirk had been apprenticed to 'the famous Rowland Ward of London' before opening his Sauchiehall Street workshop in 1896. At that time Roland Ward's was the most successful taxidermy firm operating anywhere in the world. The 'Wardian-style' was particularly celebrated for producing realistic taxidermy mounts. Kirk, as an apprentice at Ward's, would have been trained in this style of taxidermy and it follows that Kirk would have 'passed-on' this way of working to his own apprentices when training them. There are, however, two important qualifications to make in relation to this reasoning. First, I am not using the term style in the art-historical sense as a set of distinctive characteristics 'which permits the grouping/classifying of works into related categories', but rather following Thrift's non-representational understanding of practices as 'material bodies of work or styles that have gained enough stability over time, through, for example, the establishment of corporeal routines and specialised devices, to reproduce themselves'.<sup>46</sup> This not to say that material bodies of craftwork do not produce distinctive

or recognisable characteristics in their products, rather it is to emphasise style as practice not product.

Second, rather than revert to the conventional model of craft conveyance whereby craft-styles are figured as static ‘cultural traditions’ that are ‘passed-on’ intact from generation to generation, I shall trace how the Wardian-style was co-produced between bodies (both human and animal), tools and materials within a workshop and extended beyond it through the movements of Wardian ‘journeyman’ Charles Kirk. Traditionally the term journeyman refers to an apprentice who had completed their term of training and indenture.<sup>47</sup> Etymologically the word stems from the French word *journée*, which means a day’s work or a day’s travel, referring to the journeyman’s right to leave the master’s household and charge a fee for each day’s work. In many parts of Europe spending time as a ‘wandering journeyman’, moving from one town to another to gain experience of different workshops, was an important part of the ‘mastership’ process.<sup>48</sup> However, while the journeyman might simply be understood as an aspirant master, or more negatively as a ‘failed master’, the term can also refer to the journeyman ‘who renounces his place in the hierarchy of guilds [or workshops] in one city in order to travel in search of opportunity’.<sup>49</sup> Charles Kirk presents himself as an example of this as on completing his apprenticeship at Rowland Ward’s he moved from London to Glasgow to set up his own taxidermy workshop.

It would be a mistake to think of a journeyman as setting out on his or her own or renouncing ties to previous workshops, however. Rather, these associations are carried forward into new (to them) communities and ecologies of practice. The journeyman should not be understood as working in isolation. Instead, their journeying (both in terms of work, practice and movement) should be thought of as depending upon their social, material and ecological connectedness. This evokes the French definition of journeymen as ‘*compagnonnages*’. Compared to the English term ‘journeyman’, which suggests singularity, or working and journeying alone, the French term ‘*compagnon*’ is, as Cynthia Truant argues, ‘inherently suggestive of community’.<sup>50</sup>

Traditionally journeymen communities have been thought of as fraternities: fraternal networks for proving food, shelter and even burial on the road. However, the radical potential of ‘the journeyman’s associations, or *compagnonnages*’ has been highlighted in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. They compare the work of gothic journeymen

stonecutters to that of church architects in order to highlight how they exemplify two distinct modes of work and life. The church architects insisted cathedrals be built from a pre-designed plan, whereas the stonecutters worked with the materials up. The journeyman stone-cutters' emphasis on working with rather than from offers a critical distinction between procedures of 'reproducing' and 'following' according to Deleuze and Guattari. Rather than passively 'reproducing' the plans of the architect, the journeymen were 'following' or working with the 'singularities' of the stone – which is to argue that the singularities that populate the stone contribute just as much to the shape of the cathedral as the tools and the actions of the journeymen, underlining the collaborative basis of the journeyman's modes of life, work and movement.<sup>51</sup>

Therefore, while at first glance the empirical focus on the wanderings of a journeyman may seem to reframe the autonomous human subject as possessing and passing-on craft practices, by focusing instead on their 'journeyings' the aim is emphasize mobile and collaborative practices over the person. In what follows I will therefore be referring to Kirk as a 'journeying apprentice', where 'journeying' helps to overcome the term journeyman's singular, gendered, anthropocentric and static overtones, and where 'apprentice' underlines the continuation of collaborative learning (or rather following) after what is traditionally recognised as the apprenticeship period. In the remainder of the paper my aim is to trace how the Wardian-style of taxidermy achieved temporal duration and spatial extension through the journeyings of Charles Kirk.

However, while it is one thing to argue that a workshop style can gain temporal duration and spatial extension through the journeyings of an apprentice, it is quite another to try to retrace them as such workings are marked by their constitutive absence in the historical record. As Glennie and Thrift have underlined in their study of clockmaking, past practice 'is all but extra archival. Witnesses are silent. Records rarely exist'.<sup>52</sup> To counter this problem, they mobilised the skills of the 'micro-historian' and waded through the details of probate inventories, court depositions, church wardens' accounts, parish and borough records, directories, diaries and journals, newspapers and antiquarian compilations in an attempt to map out the communities and networks of practice involved in clockmaking. Moreover, interdisciplinary literatures creatively responding to the challenge of craft(ing) histories are demonstrating how an immersion in the communities and ecologies of a craft practice in the present can assist in the identification and articulation of clues to past

practice embodied in historic craft objects and artefacts.<sup>53</sup> For example, I have demonstrated how my immersion in the communities and ecologies of taxidermy practice has enabled me to access and assemble scarce source materials and identify and articulate the evidence of past practices that are embodied in taxidermy specimens and displays.<sup>54</sup> In what follows I will therefore mobilize these skills of the micro- and craft-historian, including my own apprenticeship in taxidermy, to see how far it is possible to make the range of primary and secondary sources I have assembled – including indentures, businesses correspondence and catalogues, and taxidermy manuals and displays – tell of the communities and ecologies of practice that worked and reworked the ‘Wardian-style’.<sup>55</sup>

### Working-out the ‘Wardian-style’

Rowland Ward is widely recognised as having a major impact on the development of taxidermy as a craft practice in Britain, and Pat Morris’s book *Rowland Ward: Taxidermist to the World* offers the greatest insight into the working history and creative output of ‘Rowland Ward & Co.’<sup>56</sup> Taking the form of a miscellany-cum-scrapbook, the book gathers together all that Morris was able to salvage relating to the firm’s existence over the course of twenty years of research, including numerous examples of the firm’s taxidermy mounts and dioramas, photographs of the workshops and showrooms, recorded memories from the firm’s employees and many of Rowland Ward’s personal effects. While Morris uses these materials to offer a potted history of the firm, I want to draw on this resource to attempt a reconstruction of its workshops. Although Sennett identifies that such a reconstruction – ‘the thousand little everyday moves that add up in sum to a practice’ – is often missing in the analysis of craft conveyance it is also tellingly missing from his analysis of Stradivari’s workshop.<sup>57</sup> By contrast, I will draw on Morris’s ‘ad-hoc archive’ along with Ward’s published taxidermy manuals and autobiography, in a bid to retrace the workings-out of the Wardian-style of taxidermy both in terms of its development within the workshop and its extension beyond.

Ward had trained, like many apprentices, under his father, Henry Ward (1812-1878). As a young man Henry had been employed by American naturalist John Audubon to act as taxidermist on several of his collecting trips in the early 1830s. It is not entirely clear when Henry returned to London, but on his return he is listed in the trade directories as the

‘chief artist in taxidermy to the late T.M. Williams’. Thomas Mutlow Williams worked out of 155 Oxford Street between 1845 and 1856 and was one of a handful of British taxidermists to showcase work at the 1851 Great Exhibition. This is often cited as a critical moment, and creative space, in the history of British taxidermy as the engaging and dynamic displays showcased there gave considerable impetus to the anatomically correct and artistic delineation of animals. Before 1851 French and German taxidermists were considered far in advance of ‘the old wooden school’ of British taxidermy which was producing specimens that were considered ‘stiff, gaunt, erect, and angular’.<sup>58</sup> So, for Williams’s work to have been included alongside the superior French and German artisans suggests that his chief taxidermist was producing high-quality and realistic mounts.

In 1857 Henry opened his own commercial taxidermy studio just off London’s fashionable Cavendish Square. While it took on commissions for museums, Morris concedes in his study of the ‘Ward Empire’ that it was largely in the business of setting-up ‘trophy taxidermy’ for the wealthy and highly mobile sporting elite of the British Empire. Henry Ward’s two sons, Edwin and Rowland, both trained in their father’s studios and Rowland confides in his autobiography *A Naturalist’s Life Study in the Art of Taxidermy* that he ‘derived considerable profit’ from his father’s knowledge and experience of the craft during the ten years he worked under him.<sup>59</sup> On completing their training the sons established businesses of their own. Any potential competition was resolved, however, when Edwin, emigrated to America a year after their father’s death in 1878. Rowland was then the only esteemed ‘Ward’ still in business, giving him space to develop what became London’s leading taxidermy firm, affectionately known as ‘The Jungle’, at 166-167 Piccadilly.<sup>60</sup>

It was here that the practices and principles of the ‘Wardian-style’ were cultivated. In the preface to his manual *The Sportsman’s Handbook to Collecting, Preserving and Setting-up Trophies and Specimens* Ward set out his guiding principle:

‘the accurate observation of nature in its living forms – of the behaviour and habitats of animals, not simply examination of their carcasses, or what remained of those. Such observation, carefully and correctly recorded, is invaluable to the naturalist who seeks, by the preservation unimpaired of the natural features of an animal, to use the verisimilitude so obtained as an aid to art illustration. The material means for such a result are indeed important; but something more may be done with a prepared group of animals, or a single specimen, than preservation for the identification of details in anatomy or outward appearance. Its value to the student may be preserved and increased by displaying its beauty truthfully to life,



while the beauty is recognised for its own sake by even the unscientific. This is the cause I advocate, and the end I have in view.<sup>261</sup>



**Figure 2: Photo-portrait of Rowland Ward on inside sleeve of his 1880 taxidermy manual *The Sportsman's Handbook to Collecting, Preserving and Setting-up Trophies and Specimens*. Author's own copy.**

This statement is revealing as it conveys not only Ward's 'end-view' for taxidermy but also the methods through which to achieve it. Ward was evidently of the opinion that extensive study of animals in life was as important, if not more so, than familiarity with the 'material

means' of taxidermy. It was, quite literally, an embodied knowledge of the animal's 'singularities' from the inside out. Ward articulates that life-like taxidermy required the preservation of not just the animal body but the animal essence: its attitude and behaviour. Moreover, as both his statement and portrait photograph in the manual suggest, this was to be achieved through the aids of observational drawing and modelling (see Figure 2). However, while the portrait presents an image of Ward 'the master' working alone in his studio – suggesting he was the originator of this way of working and that his studio was somewhere that individuality and distinctiveness dominated – in his autobiography Ward attributes this practice to his father's insistence that the apprentice taxidermist observe and record animals 'in nature'. This attribution is further echoed when Ward dedicates *The Sportsman's Handbook* to his father 'whose eminence as a practical taxidermist, and as a traveller, sportsman and naturalist I prize like an inheritance and affectionately emulate'.<sup>62</sup>

George Ackers argues that just like the master-apprentice relationship we should not understand the 'inheritance' of craft practices from father to son as a one-directional or passive transfer.<sup>63</sup> Rather, he explains the act of 'inheriting' in the context of craft learning as a relationship of exchanges where both the father and son develop and hone their craft practices in interaction with one another, as well as through the material ecologies of their craft(s). Thus it was whilst at his father's studio that Rowland began experimenting with what he calls his pioneering 'modelling-method'.<sup>64</sup> This required not just the modelling of accurate replacement body-parts but also the application of a 'malleable modelling compound' over them to 'simulate muscles and folds in the skin'.<sup>65</sup> According to Ward, his development of this technique considerably advanced the realism achievable in taxidermy mounts, particularly in short-haired and bare-skinned species, as it emphasised details of body shape and musculature. For example, Rowland's 'Scene from the Jungle', exhibited at the Indian and Colonial Exhibition of 1886, displayed two tigers attacking a rearing elephant, and the musculature, skin folds and facial expressions are clearly defined through the technique.<sup>66</sup>

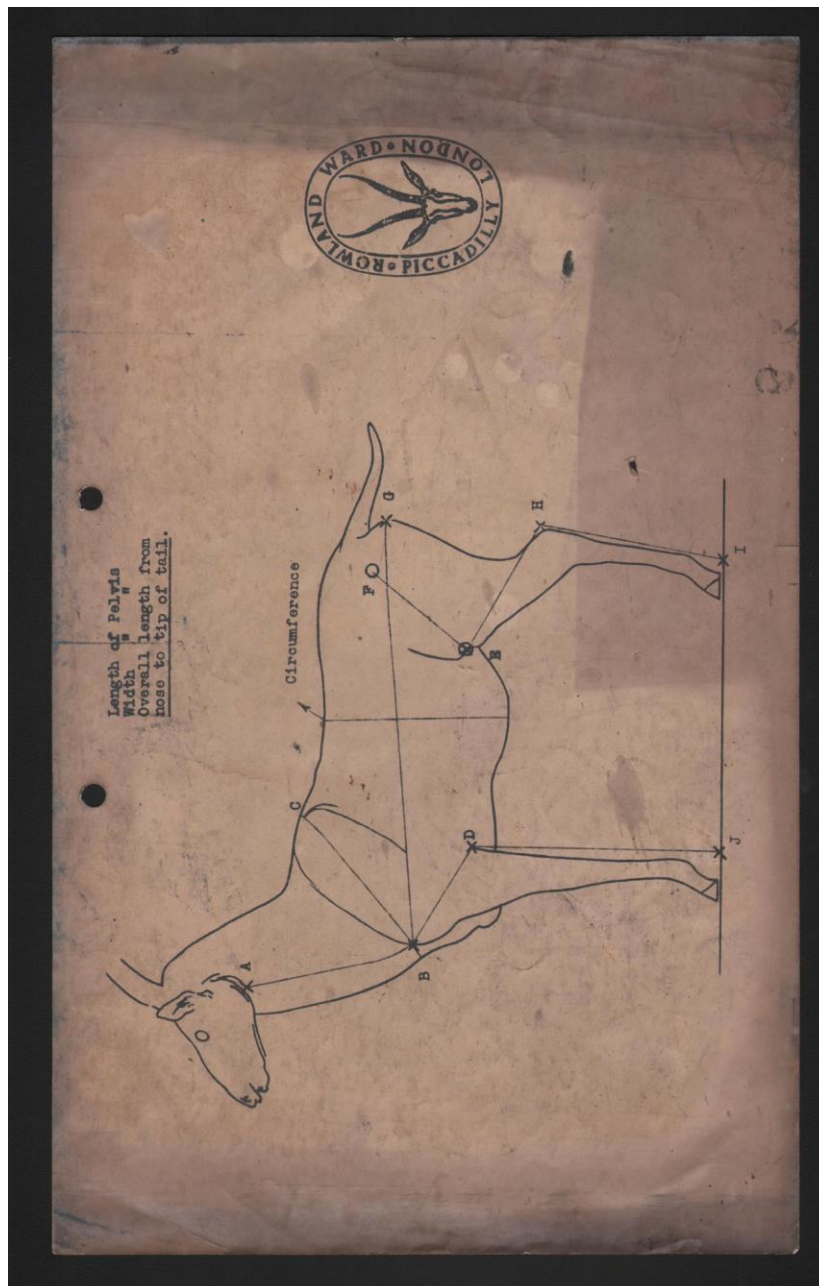
However, while in his autobiography Ward takes credit for pioneering the modelling-method, according to Morris this way of applying modelling clay over sculpted bodies was already evident in the works of German and French craftsmen at the Great Exhibition. Rather than work out the method himself, Ward's father had likely been introduced to this technique through his participation in the Great Exhibition and then incorporated it into

his own studio practice and, by extension, his sons. Rowland's subsequent participation in major international exhibitions, including those held in London (1862, 1886 and 1894), Paris (1862), Vienna (1873), Calcutta (1883 and 1884) and Antwerp (1885), would have enabled him to further develop this technique and his taxidermy practice in correspondence with these global communities of practice. He presented many dramatic animal tableaux at these exhibitions and while he also claimed to have originated the idea of setting up animals in a 'natural' setting in his autobiography, this presentation style was also manifest in the work of his contemporary exhibitors and was even in evidence at the Great Exhibition. Thus what Rowland presented as his innovations in technique are better understood as emerging from, and developing in correspondence with, the wider communities and ecologies of practice that both he and his father were enmeshed within. Or, as Glennie and Thrift have more actively put it, 'experience and learning through objects within a community of practice gave a forward "push" to "best practice" elements'.<sup>67</sup>

By the time Charles Kirk joined Ward's as an apprentice in 1887 the business had grown considerably in size thanks in part to Ward's publication of *Records of Big Game* in 1882. The regularly updated publication kept a record of the precise measurements of the largest big game trophies for an ever-increasing number of species. The competition the publication spurred between big game hunters was a great business move by Ward as it ensured he was being sent dead animals from all over the British Empire, often in batches of a hundred or more, to be set up as sporting trophies. 'The Jungle', Piccadilly, now functioned purely as a showroom and Morris explains how the actual taxidermy work of 'Rowland Ward & Co.<sup>r</sup>' was undertaken in workshops off Harley Street which accommodated several modelling rooms and employed a large workforce of professional journeymen and apprentices.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, the firm had become a school of taxidermy of sorts as it took on and trained up apprentices in the 'Wardian-style'. Although Kirk's own indenture could not be recovered, Morris reproduces a similar one in his book. Dated 1907 it details that enrolled apprentices had to agree to 'diligently attend to the said business and at all times their secrets keep and their lawful commandments willingly obey' and would not 'be absent himself from the company's service, nor do any other work for any other person... without leave of the company'.<sup>69</sup> Morris notes that in exchange for their service and secrecy the apprentice would receive five years' training and be entitled to £5 compensation if the agreement was terminated prematurely. This secrecy clause might seem a little redundant

given Ward had detailed much of his taxidermy methods in *The Sportsman Handbook*, however, he omitted the recipe for his ‘modelling compound’ and was also less than forthcoming on the matter of measuring and modelling replacement parts, aspects of the craft he clearly didn’t want to share with his competitors.

Despite this, the workshop’s practices should not be seen as the sorts of ‘personal secrets’ central to Sennett’s account of craftsmanship. Rather, the practices of Rowland Ward and Co. were a co-production between the embodied skills, disembodied animals, tools and product designs within the workshop. Yet how was a Wardian apprentice incorporated into this co-production? According to Morris’s record, apprentices were first required to familiarise themselves with the ‘material means’ of the craft by undertaking much of the less-skilled, and least enjoyed, tasks like the skinning of animal cadavers, the tanning and softening of skins, and the cleaning and measuring of bones. Although this work could be viscerally challenging (as many of the skins they received from abroad had ‘spoiled’ in transit), it enabled the close study of dead animal bodies: their anatomy, musculature and even eating habits. During the apprenticeship period Wardian ‘boys’ were also encouraged to study animals in life and they would be sent with their sketchpads to London zoo to observe how animals moved and behaved. Wardian apprentices were therefore required to demonstrate a familiarity with the singularities of the animal from the inside out before being allowed to attempt remodelling them. Morris reveals that during the time of Kirk’s apprenticeship Ward had organised his workrooms according to the various branches of the craft. Apprentices would do rotations in the ‘bird’, ‘mammal’ or ‘trophy’ workrooms and, depending on which they showed an aptitude for, would then be assigned a specialism. The workshop even developed standard measurement patterns and formulae for different types of animal to ensure replacement bodies and body-parts were made as accurately as possible (see Figure 3). These attempts to standardise methods and organise and professionalise the workforce set Ward and Co. apart from their competition and ensured continuity of style across their product range. However, rather than being understood as set of fixed and attributable characteristics, the ‘Wardian-style’ is better understood, following Gibson, as an ‘evolving co-production’ between embodied skills, disembodied animals, tools and product designs within the workshop.<sup>70</sup> As a result the secrets of Rowland Ward and Co. did not die when Ward did in 1912. The workshops continued to evolve the ‘Wardian-style’ until they closed and, as the next section will explore, the style even travelled elsewhere through the journeyings of Charles Kirk.



**Figure 3: Standard measurement pattern for an antelope form Rowland Ward Ltd. Author's own copy.**

### Re-working a workshop-style

In his study of Rowland Ward & Co. Morris states that very few Ward apprentices left the firm to set up on their own. Kirk's journeyings are a rare exception which offer the opportunity of retracing what happened when a 'journeying apprentice' carried forward the Wardian-style into new contexts of practice. However, while McCorrisken's floor plan informs us that Kirk had been apprenticed to 'the famous Rowland Ward of London'

before opening his own workshop in 1896, it gives no information about the length of his apprenticeship, when he left or his movements after. The retired Kelvingrove taxidermist who had originally lent me the folder informed me he had compiled more information about Kirk's working life in a file at the Kelvingrove Museum archive.<sup>71</sup> As well as containing photocopies of McCorrisken's floorplan it held a letter replying to an enquiry made by John McCorrisken to Rowland Ward Ltd. on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1975 which stated that they had no official records relating to Kirk's time at Ward's. However, the file also contained a small publication entitled *Kirk on the Craig: Charles Kirk's photography on Ailsa Craig 1896-1922*. Produced by T. Norman Tait in collaboration with the Kelvingrove Museum it gives a few biographical details about Kirk and charts his movements as a journeyman.<sup>72</sup> He was born in 1872 in the Newington area of Edinburgh, the second son of James Kirk, a grocer and wine merchant. Some years later the family moved to the Lambeth area of London where Kirk chose to train in the craft of taxidermy and was apprenticed at Rowland Ward and Co. in 1887. After his training, Kirk returned to Scotland in around 1894 where he started work at a taxidermist's in Perth before opening his own business at 156 Sauchiehall Street in 1896. This gives some sense of Kirk's movements and how he incorporated himself into new communities and ecologies of practice that enabled him to rework the Wardian-style at his workshop.

Having trained at Ward & Co., Kirk would have been encouraged to study nature in its natural state so as to produce life-like taxidermy. While he may have sketched caged animals at London Zoo, advances in photography meant that it was becoming an increasingly attractive option over field-drawing as an aid for nature study.<sup>73</sup> According to Tait, it was while in Perth that Kirk started to photograph wild birds. Kirk pursued his hobby with 'obvious success' as he was appointed to the committee of the Photographic Section of the Perthshire Society of Natural History, and at the opening of the Perth Museum on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 1895 he exhibited some of his wildlife photography to 'favourable reception'.<sup>74</sup> Once settled in Glasgow, Kirk gained 'considerable reputation' for his specialism, photographing seabirds.





**Figure 4: Images of and by Charles Kirk on Ailsa Craig. Images reproduced with kind permission from Glasgow Museums.**

To do this Kirk made regular visits to Ailsa Craig, an island in the outer Firth of the Clyde. Uninhabited apart from the lighthouse keepers, Kirk and his society associates caught the ferry across with the Ailsite quarrymen. Rising 1,110 feet out of the water the steep cliffs on the northern face made an ideal nesting habitat for gannets, puffins and other seabirds, yet a precarious perch for the bird-photographer (see Figure 4). The historical association between wildlife photography and trophy hunting, and, by extension, taxidermy is well documented.<sup>75</sup> However, while the camera was gradually replacing the gun in certain naturalist circles, at the time of Kirk's expeditions to Ailsa Craig naturalists and sportsmen were still more renowned for zealously collecting bird and animal trophies than for photographing them. The seabird and egg 'harvest' on Ailsa Craig was appalling, with tens of thousands of guillemots, gannets, puffins and fulmars being killed annually.<sup>76</sup> Given Kirk's profession it is highly unlikely that he returned to his taxidermy workshop with just photographic plates in hand. His photographic practice was not just a way of procuring specimens, however. It was also an extension of the Wardian-style. Kirk would have recognised photography as a way to refine his appreciation of animal and bird behaviour. Ward even recommended the use of photography as an aid for taxidermy in the twentieth-

century editions of his *Sportsman's Handbook*, arguing that photographs depicting animals in their 'natural environs' could give the taxidermist a reference point from which to work when crafting animals and setting up cases.



**Figure 5: Sea-bird diorama produced by Charles Kirk & Co. For the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow. Image taken by Author.**

A surviving bird-diorama made by Kirk's workshop for the Kelvingrove Museum evidences that Kirk's photography was certainly having an impact on the taxidermy work his workshop was producing (see Figure 5).<sup>77</sup> Not only are the birds accurately modelled and mounted in natural poses but, again following the 'Wardian-style', the case also depicts the birds in their natural setting. A great deal of work has gone into replicating the birds' cliff-edge habitat: from the rocks being modelled out of papier-mâché and painted to look real (they have even been adorned with lichen and bird excrement), to the use of real kelp (dried and painted black) to make the birds' nests and real moss (dried and painted green) to fill in the rock cracks. The diorama is almost an exact replica of Kirk's seabird portraits, suggesting that he was encouraging his staff to use his photographs as a reference. Moreover, Tait reveals that Ludovic Colquhoun, an employee at Kirk's taxidermy firm, also regularly accompanied Kirk on his trips to Ailsa Craig.



The diorama and Kirk's visits to Ailsa Craig with employees also suggest that he was incorporating yet reworking the Wardian-style of taxidermy at Kirk and Co. Revisiting McCorrisken's floor plan at this point helps to build on these suggestions. The floor plan discloses that the workshop was spread over three levels: the main street-level floor where all the workbenches and employees were situated, a smaller basement level where the tanning and 'wet' equipment was kept, and a second floor used for storage and drying purposes. Although smaller in scale this confirms that, like Ward and Co., Kirk and Co. were equipped to deal with all aspects of taxidermy practice on site: from skinning and tanning to mounting and drying. Moreover, going by the number of work benches on the main floor, the firm was equipped to deal with a large amount of commissions at any one time. Each of the eight work benches was assigned to a different staff member; from left, Mr Wotherspoon, McClintock, Stout, Colquhoun, McCorrisken, Frazer, Becket and Duncan, and these main craftsmen were assisted by a further three 'boys': McNee, Stirling and Crichton. McCorrisken's note that the 'boys' 'would have come after me as I advanced in taxidermy' suggests that the firm also had a system of apprenticeship in place, further implying that it was following the ways of the Wardian workshop.

An indenture made between Kirk and McCorrisken, also held in the Kelvingrove file, confirms as much. The indenture, dated 1913 (although recognising McCorrisken had actually been at the firm since 1911), echoes the one from Ward's recovered by Morris. In comparable fashion, Kirk expects McCorrisken 'diligently to attend' the firm and 'not reveal any secrets of' of its practice. McCorrisken, again just like a Ward apprentice, was also expected to conduct himself in a 'proper and befitting manner' both within and beyond the workshop and never to do any business 'for his own behalf'. On his part, Kirk 'obliges himself to teach and instruct his said apprentice in his Art and Craft of taxidermy so far as he may practice the same, and the capacity of his apprentice will admit', and to pay McCorrisken at the rate of six shillings per week for the first year rising to sixteen shillings for the sixth and last year. The similarities drawn between the two indentures suggest that Kirk was following Ward and attempting to implement an apprenticeship-training programme. However, a set of documents within the Kelvingrove file relating to another former employee of Kirk's – William Stirling – demonstrate that the contract, and thus relationship, between master and apprentice was not as rigid nor fixed as these indentures might suggest.

These documents, written and compiled by Sterling himself, state that he joined Kirk's & Co. at fifteen years of age in 1920. Although his indenture was not included in the file, a letter, dated 19<sup>th</sup> January 1921, from Kirk to Stirling's mother offering Stirling an apprenticeship reveals some of the negotiation behind the drawing up of the indenture. For example, the letter from Kirk's states that 'In pre-war days apprentices started at 6 shillings weekly for the first year and 18 shillings for sixth year, but I have considered the increased rate of journeymen's wages now prevailing, and have drawn up a new scale as follows' with the first year starting at fifteen shillings weekly to the six and last year at forty shillings weekly'. However, following this he concedes that 'There is always a possibility of a fall in wages in course of a year or so, and thought at first of drawing up a scale by which the apprentices would receive a stated percentage of the prevailing journeyman's wage, but on second thoughts I felt this arrangement would be too indefinite and unsatisfactory'. Kirk goes on write that he has discussed these terms with William and is now seeking Mrs Sterling's approval of them. This suggests that apprenticeship indentures were often negotiated on a case-by-case basis and supports Griffiths' argument that there was a 'multitude of particular worlds' among apprentices.<sup>78</sup> It also suggests that the terms of apprenticeship were becoming more flexible, less ridged, and particularly less secure after the First World War.

There are other similarities between Ward's and Co. and Kirk's and Co. A 1910 catalogue for 'Charles Kirk and Co.' in the Kelvingrove file confirms that Kirk, again following Ward, was training his staff and apprentices to specialise in the separate branches of the craft. Notes on the back of McCorricken's floor plan corroborate this, stating that Donnelly focused on 'skinning and cleaning specimens', while Becket 'was excellent at bird taxidermy', McClintock and Fraser were 'concerned mostly with large mammals and mounted heads', while Wotherspoon was 'mainly concerned with fish mounting and casing and case-work'. Although only one workman was dedicated to each specialism, it is clear from the catalogue that Kirk and Co. were attempting to match the range of production at Ward and Co., with the catalogue boasting that the workshop could handle 'Everything from the setting of an insect to the modelling of an elephant'. The catalogue states that, again much like Ward and Co., the products of Kirk's studio had 'a reputation for life-like beauty and artistic skill' and that their workmanship was in demand by some of Scotland's premier museums. One of the photographic plates in the catalogue documents a seal case

set up by the firm for the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh. Kirk would have chosen to highlight this particular case to demonstrate the firm's abilities in the setting up of large mammal taxidermy. Seals were also notoriously difficult to mount as they were hairless, which meant the taxidermist had to sculpt the underlying structure so as to simulate the folds in the blubber. Moreover, if the modelled replacement body was too big for the skin, it would mean that the skin would crack as it was drying, entirely ruining the mount. Getting such difficult subject matter right was therefore evidence of the firm's ability to produce life-like quality taxidermy. Kirk even reproduced the museum's letter of appreciation on receipt of the case to highlight how highly his workmanship was regarded:

"I must really congratulate you on the seal case. It is marvellously good and I have never seen anything of the kind to equal it.

I could not have believed it possible to produce anything so true to nature. It is beyond criticism, from the smallest stone on the beach to the grand old male seal that surmounts the highest rock, and it is a monument to your skill as a taxidermist and an artist.

W. Eagle Clarke. (Curator)"

Although there was no formal guild of taxidermists at that time the seal diorama acted almost like a 'masterpiece' for Kirk, as it enabled him to demonstrate his skills in even the most difficult aspects of the craft, and that his peers had assessed his work favourably.<sup>79</sup> However, as with the work of Ward and Co., the work being produced at Kirk and Co. was not that of a lone master but was rather a co-production between embodied skills, disembodied animals, tools and product designs within the workshop. It is also clear from the floor plan that several different workmen's embodied skills would have contributed to the seal diorama's making from the seal mounts to rock- and case-work. Furthermore, the seal case once again evidences that Kirk and Co. were employing the modelling-method Kirk would have learnt at Ward's and following their style of presenting the animals in their 'natural setting'. However, rather than Kirk and his workmen simply reproducing these techniques and ways of working, it is also clear that Kirk and Co. were developing them both within the workshop and in correspondence with its wider communities and ecologies of practice. For example, Kirk and Co.'s dioramas are far more naturalistic than Ward and Co.'s dramatic groupings such as 'Scene from the Jungle'. Where Ward and Co. were displaying uncharacteristic scenes of combat, Kirk and Co. were posing animals in realistic and restful groupings and also attempting to reproduce the animals' habitat as accurately as possible. These differences likely evolved out of the different communities and ecologies of practices the workshops were embedded within. Ward and Co.'s

association with international exhibitions and extremely wealthy patrons like the Duke of Orleans and Lord Rothschild would have contributed to their tendency to produce dramatic and often outlandish tableaux. By comparison, Kirk and Co.'s association with the natural history society and its photographic communities of practice would have likely contributed to their commitment to realism. This underlines that Kirk and Co. were not just reproducing the 'Wardian-style' but reworking it.

Striking a different note, McCorrisken's floor plan also informs us that '14 war upset everything' at Kirk and Co., as 'Stout', 'Duncan' and 'Ludovic Colquhoun' were all 'killed 14 war'. We also learn that 'owing to a fire [the workshop was] removed to Great Western Road opposite St George RD Underground 1920'. McCorrisken notes that there was a general decline in work orders of all kinds after the firm removed to 56-58 Great Western Road, explaining that the firm not only suffered due to a general worsening of economy but because of Charles Kirk's untimely death in 1922.<sup>80</sup> Although David Wotherspoon took over the business, the continued decline in orders forced him to downsize again and move to a much smaller establishment at 18 Gibson Street in 1926. This was clearly not enough to save the firm, as the poor state of the economy combined with the fact that taxidermy was becoming increasingly unfashionable meant that even the firm's once lucrative trade in trophy taxidermy was diminishing. The firm, still listed as 'Charles Kirk and Co.', closed for good in 1928.

As we have seen, Sennett argues that when a master dies 'a concrete limit [is] placed on the long-term viable life of the workshop' as 'his secrets died with him'.<sup>81</sup> While the life of Charles Kirk and Co. would seem to agree with this, it is clear from McCorrisken's notes that Charles Kirk and Co. enjoyed a form of afterlife through the journeyings of his apprentices. For example, after the closure in 1928, Stirling, one of Kirk's 'boys', completed his apprenticeship and was employed as a taxidermist and conservator at the Royal Scottish Museum. We also learn from McCorrisken's floorplan that Arthur Becket and William McClintock went on to work at the Kelvingrove Museum. The retired taxidermist who had originally lent me the files on Kirk informed me that, although long defunct, Charles Kirk and Co. continued to influence the practice of taxidermy at these Scottish institutions well into latter half of the twentieth century as much of their in-house training was led by Kirk's journeymen. Sterling, Becket, McClintock and McCorrisken

apparently continued to work in the ‘Kirk-style’ and exemplified the displays produced by Charles Kirk and Co. as the standard to aspire to. Thus, much like Ward and Co. did through Charles Kirk, the working practices of ‘Charles Kirk & Co.’ enjoyed a form of temporal and spatial extension through the ‘journeyings’ of Kirk’s apprentices. The ‘Wardian-Kirk-style’ can therefore be understood as a relational and ecological achievement that was co-produced between bodies, materials and ecologies, and which achieved spatial extension and temporal duration through the ‘journeyings’ of its apprentices.

## CONCLUSION – WORKING WITH AN ETHIC OF APPRENTICESHIP

The overarching aim of this paper has been to highlight historical geographies of apprenticeship as a rich, and currently underdeveloped, area of study. Although the term and practice of ‘apprenticeship’ is neither without its historical baggage nor difficult histories, the first section of this paper underlined how the figure of the apprentice and the forms and geographies of apprenticeship were far more dynamic than traditionally understood. The second section of the paper then emphasised the relevance and resonance of apprenticeship for rethinking and retracing craft conveyance. Drawing on the work of anthropologists and geographers it argued that the model of learning between master and apprentice is more dynamic, relational and context dependent than has been figured in Sennett’s seminal text on craftsmanship. In particular it challenged Sennett’s reasoning that the difficulty of knowledge transfer within the craftsman’s workshop is that it becomes the master’s ‘personal secret’, a view that works to overemphasize the authority and individuality of the master. By contrast, anthropologists have long critiqued this rigid and one-directional model of learning, offering instead the concepts of communities and ecologies of practice to emphasize learning as a collaborative, situated practice.

Geographers have, in turn, challenged the humanistic conceptions of learning and ‘personal apprenticeship’ which have largely taken hold in the anthropological literature. By contrast, and via post- and more-than-human ontologies, geographers are increasingly paying attention to the ways in which craft practices are co-produced between different actors (both human and non-human), technologies and materials in and across a variety of temporal and spatial scales, contexts and settings – extending what is meant by ‘communities’ and ‘ecologies’ of practice. In particular they have pushed for greater

recognition of the ‘material inheritances’ of craft production that are reconfigured in place over successive generations. My contribution to these currents of thought is to think and work through how craft practices travel from place to place over successive generations. Specifically, this has been to question how the material and corporeal practices of a workshop gain not just temporal duration but also spatial extension. Following the ‘journeyings’ of Wardian apprentice Charles Kirk demonstrated that rather than passively absorbing the ‘secrets’ of a workshop the apprentice actively co- and re-produces its material and corporeal practices and carries them forward (as inheritances) where they are actively reworked both into and by new communities and ecologies of practice.

This makes three important contributions to historical and theoretical understandings of craft conveyance. First, it asserts that a ‘workshop-style’ needs to be understood not as a static set of characteristics or techniques in the art-historical sense, but following Thrift’s theorising as ‘material bodies or styles of work that gain enough stability over time to reproduce themselves’.<sup>82</sup> This emphasises style as practice not product. Second, to work through how a workshop-style travels from place to place over successive generations it was necessary to emphasise and develop the figure of the journeyman. Where the master and apprentice are often understood as ‘place-bound’, the journeyman moves from workshop to workshop. However, to overcome the singular, gendered and anthropocentric overtones of the term journeyman I argued it be refigured as a ‘journeying apprentice’ to emphasise mobile and collaborative practices over person. This was also to underline the continuation of collaborative learning after what is traditionally recognised as the apprenticeship period. Thus, Charles Kirk was not simply reproducing the Wardian-style in Glasgow, rather Kirk and Co. were reworking it in correspondence with their distinct communities and ecologies of practice. Or, to expand on Glennie and Thrift, ‘experience and learning through objects [within communities and ecologies of practice] gave a forward “push” to “best practice” elements’.<sup>83</sup> Finally, this means that craft conveyance depends not on stability, as per Thrift’s theorisation above, but on momentum. The Wardian-style gained temporal duration and spatial extension as a material body of work because it gained enough momentum over time, through the establishment of corporeal routines and specialised devices such as the modelling compound and body patterns, and through its connectedness with new communities and ecologies of practice, to not just co- and re-produce itself within the workshop but to journey beyond.

Jonathan Martineau has, however, cautioned that ‘the agency of labouring human bodies’ can be ‘lost in this fetishized objectal agency’.<sup>84</sup> Although this paper has focused on tracing the human-non-human alliances at work in taxidermy craft conveyance, elsewhere I more fully flesh-out the sensuous yet contentious agency of labouring human bodies and dead animal bodies involved in the craft.<sup>85</sup> More broadly, emphasizing the human-nonhuman alliances at work in craft conveyance is not to downplay the agency of labouring human bodies, but is rather to highlight the significant role other bodies, human and non, singular and collective, play in the conveyance of craft practices over time and place. And, just as Glennie and Thrift have emphasised the importance of craftsmen ‘learning from objects’, I argue the same ought to be true for the historical geographer.<sup>86</sup> Thus, any researcher interested in retracing craft conveyance must commit to a period of apprenticeship, a period of immersion in the craft’s communities and ecologies of practice, so that its corporeal, material and geographical conveyances can be identified, traced and articulated.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For a review see C. Carr and C. Gibson, Geographies of making: rethinking materials and skills for volatile futures, *Progress in Human Geography* 40 (2016) 297-315.

<sup>2</sup> For exceptions see A. Warren and C. Gibson, Crafting regional cultural production: emergence, crisis and consolidation in the Gold Coast surfboard industry, *Australian Geographer* 44 (2013) 365-381; C. Gibson, Material inheritances: how place, materiality, and labor process underpin the path-dependent evolution of contemporary craft production, *Economic Geography* 92 (2016) 61-86.

<sup>3</sup> P. Glennie and N. Thrift, *Shaping the Day: A History of Timekeeping in England and Wales 1300-1800*, Oxford, 2009; P. Glennie and N.J. Thrift, The spaces of clock times, in: P. Joyce (Ed.), *The Social in Question: New Bearings in History and the Social Sciences*, London, 2002, 171; M. Patchett, The taxidermist’s apprentice: stitching together the past and present of a craft practice, *Cultural Geographies* 23 (2016) 401-419.

<sup>4</sup> Glennie and Thrift, The spaces of clock times, 152.

<sup>5</sup> See Warren and Gibson, Crafting regional cultural production; Gibson, Material inheritances; N.J. Thomas, D.C. Harvey and H. Hawkins, Crafting the region: creative industries and practices of regional space, *Regional Studies* 47 (2013) 75-88.

<sup>6</sup> For an exception see C.W.J. Withers and E. Matthews, The geography of apprenticeship migration in Gloucestershire, 1690-1830, *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 110 (1992) 159-180.

<sup>7</sup> K.D.M. Snell, The apprenticeship system in British history: the fragmentation of a cultural institution, *History of Education* 25 (1996) 303.

<sup>8</sup> R. Sennett, *The Craftsman*, London, 2008, 58.

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- <sup>39</sup> Glennie and Thrift, *Shaping the Day*, 96, 397 and 398.
- <sup>40</sup> Gibson, Material inheritances, 61 and 67.
- <sup>41</sup> Patchett, The taxidermist's apprentice.
- <sup>42</sup> Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 59.
- <sup>43</sup> Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 59.
- <sup>44</sup> I found out later that John McCorricken would often visit Dick Hendry and the other taxidermists at the Kelvingrove and reminisce about his time spent there and that Dick encouraged him to record details about the workshop and its employees in the form of a floor plan. I retain a photocopy of all files in Dick's original folder.
- <sup>45</sup> M. Patchett, Taxidermy workshops: differently figuring the working of bodies and bodies at work in the past, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (in press).
- <sup>46</sup> N.J. Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory: Space/Politics/Affect*, Oxon, 2008, 8.
- <sup>47</sup> Epstein, Labour mobility.
- <sup>48</sup> P.D. Holthaus, *Wanderings of a Journeyman Tailor Through Europe and the East During the Years 1824 to 1840*, London, 1844.
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- <sup>52</sup> Glennie and Thrift, *The spaces of clock times*, 152.
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- <sup>57</sup> Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 77.
- <sup>58</sup> M. Browne, *Practical Taxidermy: A Manual of Instruction to the Amateur in Collecting, Preserving, and Setting Up Natural History Specimens of all Kinds*, London, 1878, 51.
- <sup>59</sup> R. Ward, *A Naturalist's Life Study in the Art of Taxidermy*, London, 1913.
- <sup>60</sup> Morris, *Rowland Ward*, 27.
- <sup>61</sup> R. Ward, *The Sportsman's Handbook to Collecting, Preserving and Setting-up Trophies and Specimens*, London, 1880, preface.
- <sup>62</sup> Ward, *The Sportsman's Handbook*, preface.
- <sup>63</sup> G. Ackers, The impact of deindustrialisation on masculine career identity: an intergenerational study of men from naval repair families in Medway, Kent, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Huddersfield, 2016. See also G. Ackers, Rethinking deindustrialisation and male career crisis, *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling* 42 (2014) 500-510.
- <sup>64</sup> Ward, *A Naturalist's Life Study*, 19.
- <sup>65</sup> Ward, *A Naturalist's Life Study*, 19-20.
- <sup>66</sup> For an image of 'Scene from the Jungle' see: <http://museummenagerie.blogspot.com/p/rowland-ward.html>
- <sup>67</sup> Glennie and Thrift, *Shaping the Day*, 399.
- <sup>68</sup> Prior to 1939, Rowland Ward Ltd had a very strict rule that there would be no photographs taken of any work in progress. The only photographs permitted were of finished work taken officially by the foreman and were intended only for use in the firm's publications. Thus there are no photographs relating to the period of Kirk's employment.
- <sup>69</sup> Morris, *Rowland Ward*, 40.
- <sup>70</sup> Gibson, *Material inheritances*, 67.
- <sup>71</sup> This file is held in Glasgow Museums Resources Centre Archives, Nitshill, Glasgow. The folder and its contents have yet to be accessioned but can be asked for on request by contacting Richard Sutcliffe, Curator of Natural History.
- <sup>72</sup> T.N. Tait, *Kirk on the Craig: Charles Kirk's photography on Ailsa Craig 1896-1922*, Glasgow, 2005, 5-6.
- <sup>73</sup> M. Henning, Skins of the real: taxidermy and photography, in: B. Snaebjörnsdóttir and M. Wilson (Eds), *Nanoq: Flatout and Bluesome*, Bristol, 2006, 136-147.
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- <sup>75</sup> For example, D. Haraway, Teddy bear patriarchy: taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936, *Social Text* 11 (1984) 20-64; J. Ryan, 'Hunting with the camera': photography, wildlife and colonialism in Africa, in: C. Philo and C. Wilbert (Eds), *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations*, London, 2000, 203-221; M. Brower, Trophy shots: early North American photographs of non-human animals and the display of masculine prowess, *Society and Animals* 13 (2005) 15-31; M. Brower, *Developing Animals: Wildlife and Early American Photography*, Minneapolis, 2011.
- <sup>76</sup> M. Shrubb, *Feasting, Fowling and Feathers: A History of the Exploitation of Wild Birds*, London, 2013.
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- <sup>78</sup> Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, 165.
- <sup>79</sup> It should be noted that there is a 'Guild of Taxidermists' representing UK taxidermists but that this was not formed until 1976.
- <sup>80</sup> Charles Kirk died of an asthma attack, an illness from which he had long suffered, and must have been aggravated by his working environment.
- <sup>81</sup> Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 74 and 78.

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<sup>82</sup> Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory*, 8.

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<sup>86</sup> Glennie and Thrift, *Shaping the Day*, 398.